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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Special themes: the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals

Draft recommendations submitted by the Rapporteur

Special theme: the Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples: redefining the Goals

1. During the dialogue with indigenous peoples on the Millennium Development Goals, many indigenous organizations made statements about the urgent need to redefine the Goals. While the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues appreciates that it may not be possible to redefine the Goals, it recognizes that there is a clear need to redefine approaches to the implementation of the Goals to include the perspectives, concerns, experiences and world views of indigenous peoples. Statements also confirmed the need for indigenous peoples to provide their own definitions of poverty and development and that there should be full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. The rights-based approach to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals was again stressed.

3. Indigenous peoples in developed countries pointed out that indigenous peoples suffered significant disparities in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. Such disparities tended to be masked at the international level owing to the lack of disaggregated data and the comparative high level of enjoyment of such rights by the non-indigenous population. As a result, there is insufficient recognition that there are challenges for meeting the Goals in developed countries. Concern was expressed that developed countries treat the Goals as a matter of foreign policy, relevant only to the country's international aid programme.

4. The Permanent Forum recommends that States, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and other relevant agencies adopt targeted policies, programmes, projects and budgets to address the staggering prevalence of diabetes among

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indigenous peoples and put in place culturally appropriate health services, health education and awareness-raising initiatives to treat and prevent its rapid growth. Particular attention should be given to pregnant women, whose reproductive health is closely linked to the future risk of diabetes of their children.

5. The Permanent Forum urges developed countries to adopt national processes to implement the Goals with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples within those countries.

6. The Permanent Forum strongly encourages States to provide disaggregated data on health and social welfare indicators for indigenous populations in order to better assist in the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes at the national and international levels.

7. The Permanent Forum encourages States and United Nations agencies (e.g., the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and WHO) to promote programmes that facilitate improvement of capacity among indigenous families and communities to understand financial management in order to support decision-making about positive health choices.

8. The Permanent Forum supports the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its current effort to draft a general comment on the status of indigenous children worldwide, supports the Committee's effort to get broad input from indigenous peoples and encourages wide dissemination of the final report to indigenous peoples, States, United Nations bodies and agencies.

9. The Permanent Forum requests the submission of data from indigenous peoples and State agencies on the mortality rates and injuries among indigenous children placed in foster care, with special attention placed on deaths among infants and children with disabilities and special needs.

10. The Permanent Forum reaffirms and reiterates that self-determination, free, prior and informed consent and accountability form the basis and prerequisite for any relationship that can be called a true partnership for development, and urges all States, indigenous peoples, United Nations bodies, international development agencies, corporations and the private sector, as well as civil society, to uphold these vital principles.

11. The Permanent Forum recognizes and endorses the recommendations contained in the final report of its workshop on partnership visions for the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (Nuuk, Greenland, 14 and 15 February) (E/C.19/2006/4/Add.2, para. 51) and the reports of the meeting on indigenous peoples and indicators of well-being (E/CN.19/2006/CRP.3, para. 14) and the international expert group meetings on the Millennium Development Goals, indigenous participation and good governance. The final report of the Special Rapporteur on treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous peoples (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/20, para. 255) and the report of expert seminar on indigenous peoples' permanent sovereignty over natural resources and on their relationship to land (E/CN.19/2006/6/Add.8, annex, paras. 8, 10, 12 and 13) are similarly endorsed.

12. The Permanent Forum strongly urges Member States to uphold the linguistic rights of indigenous peoples.

13. The Permanent Forum recommends more interactive and increased engagement of indigenous peoples with the WHO regional office in Bangkok and also WHO national offices to make sure that they implement the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on health and those of the Programme of Action relating to health issues.

14. The Permanent Forum recommends that the United Nations Environment Programme adopt an indigenous peoples' policy and ensure the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the formulation of this policy.

15. The Permanent Forum recommends that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) establish an institutional partnership with indigenous peoples so they can fully participate in the monitoring mechanisms of UNESCO conventions that are relevant to indigenous peoples. The Forum further recommends that UNESCO establish an advisory group of indigenous experts to provide advice.

16. The Permanent Forum requests further inter-agency cooperation and collaboration regarding data collection and case studies on indigenous peoples and migration, in particular the creation of a task force to specifically address migration issues of indigenous peoples within the existing Inter-Agency Support Group for the Permanent Forum. Such a task force could assist with studies by indigenous leaders and experts and promote capacity-building projects dealing with the migration of indigenous peoples.

17. The Permanent Forum urges the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to engage with the Forum and other partners in the global AIDS movement, to initiate universal access to treatment, to develop a set of resources highlighting effective approaches and best practices for HIV prevention and AIDS care in indigenous communities, particularly from the developed world, including the development of an appropriate paper to provide guidance to national HIV surveillance systems, and to advocate and promote meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in HIV policy and planning.

18. The Permanent Forum urges all African Governments to comply with and support United Nations resolutions and mechanisms that include references to indigenous peoples, specifically Agenda 21, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and other United Nations agreements.

19. The Permanent Forum urges African Governments to ensure the full participation of indigenous peoples in the development of policies regarding the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in all the activities of Governments, the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

20. The Permanent Forum urges the United Nations, with the support of donor agencies, to implement monitoring mechanisms before its next session convenes so as to reduce the negative impact of existing agricultural projects on indigenous nomadic peoples in Africa.

21. The Permanent Forum urges all African Governments to invite representatives from indigenous peoples' organizations to participate in round-table dialogues as a way to resolve conflict while protecting indigenous peoples from armed conflict, particularly in the Sudan and in the Great Lakes, Niger Delta and Sahara regions.

22. The Permanent Forum requests the Economic and Social Council to organize an all-Africa conference to evaluate the status of the health sector in Africa by taking into account the realities of indigenous peoples in remote areas. It requests, furthermore that the disaggregated data in the sectors be updated accordingly in order to achieve Millennium Development Goals 4 to 6.

23. The Permanent Forum welcomes and fully supports the holding of an international expert seminar on indicators relevant to indigenous peoples and biodiversity, to be organized by the working group on indicators of the Indigenous International Forum on Biodiversity under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity, in cooperation with the Permanent Forum.

24. The Permanent Forum invites the Inter-Agency Support Group for the Permanent Forum, Governments and donors to maximize collaboration, avoid duplication and advance joint efforts to strengthen work on data collection and identification of indicators relevant to indigenous peoples, the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

25. The Permanent Forum requests the coordinator of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People to provide a report to the annual sessions of the Permanent Forum regarding progress on the Programme of Action of the Decade and, in that regard, invites States, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations, indigenous peoples and other non-governmental organizations to provide information to the coordinator in that regard.

26. The Permanent Forum recommends that United Nations regional directors for Latin America appoint focal points on indigenous issues in order to form an inter-agency group at the regional level.

27. The Permanent Forum recommends that the regional focal points' group draft its own mandate and identify at least one common regional project or activity.

28. The Permanent Forum recommends that staff in country offices ensure the full participation of indigenous peoples in conducting evaluations under the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as is recommended at the 2004 framework.

29. The Permanent Forum recommends that the Secretary-General's office urgently set up a meeting between the Permanent Forum and the high-level panel on reform to secure the integration of indigenous peoples' perspectives into the ongoing process of furthering system-wide coherence.